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ABSTRACT

This book details a 3-year study in which lower-middle to middle class, white, black, and Latina middle school and high school girls were interviewed about their feelings concerning appearance, their eating habits, and dieting. The findings, based on what the girls reported, are explored and give insight into the influence of peers, family, and the media on girls' sense of self. The book also provides insights into how parents talk to teenagers about their changing bodies, the issues and struggles that mothers face in bringing up daughters, and how to move beyond stereotypical images of beauty. Particular attention is paid to the many positive attitudes and behaviors girls felt in relation to their bodies and how that ideal differs across age groups and ethnic groups. The book contains the following seven chapters: (1) "In the Presence of the Perfect Girl"; (2) "Fat Talk"; (3) "Are Girls Really Dieting?"; (4) "Who Will I Look Like?"; (5) "Mothers, Daughters, and Dieting"; (6) "Looking Good among African-American Girls"; and (7) "What We Can Do." Two appendices include research strategies and tables of data, endnotes, acknowledgements, and an index. (SD)

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